Literary News and Criticism

A Brilliant Example of the Art of Journalism.

ANGLO-AMERICAN MEMORIES. By George W. Smalley. Frontispiece. 8vo, pp. ix, 441. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

In a brief preface to these "Memories" Mr. Smalley observes that they are, in some slight degree, autobiographical. He could not very well have written the letters to The Tribune of which his volume is composed without bringing in his own relation to the famous people whose characteristics it has been his chief purpose to portray. But, studied from a certain point of view, the book would in any case draw attention to the author for his own sake. Bringing together the recollections and impressions with which our readers have been made familiar through successive Sundays in the last year or two, it demonstrates with weight and brilliancy the singular authority of Mr. Smalley as a literary craftsman. Merely as contributions to current journalism these chapters have a high interest.

The writers of books who like to distinguish between the journalist and the man of letters are wont to base their argument upon a distinction between the respective functions of the two. These, of course, have next to nothing to do with the matter. The journalist approves himself a man of letters by the simple processes of exercising intellectual power and writing well. Moreover, doing this, it is in his way to leave his place in the hierarchy of the writing profession to take care of itself. The point is important. Spontaneity, a complete freedom from self-consciousness, are indispensable to the best journalism. A right instinct, to say nothing of the practical conditions of newspaper work, has always led the journalist to reject the Stevensonian ideal of literary practice. Vitality, above all things, is essential to an article in a newspaper, and this is in peril when you begin too curiously to consider the turning of a phrase. The journalist has peculiarly, no doubt, the temptation to indulge in that heightened and telling way of stating things which, if we recollect aright, Matthew Arnold deprecated in Macaulay. It seems only yesterday that Mr. Kipling had set a swarm of his imitators to the cultivation of those staccato effects which reached their extreme point of development in the clever but specious writings of the late G. W. Steevens. The maturest, most finished masters of journalism must not infrequently grant themselves something in the nature of a purple patch, or at all events a stroke of picturesqueness, of color. When Mr. Smalley describes in this volume how he came to meet Bismarck, in 1866, he says: "For the first time I looked into the pale blue eyes whence had flashed the lightnings that had riven the power of Austria on the field of Sadowa." But we do not need to cite the context to show how the letter in which this sentence occurs is "all of a piece," a bit of portraiture into which that almost romantic impression makes its way quite naturally and with absolute artistic fitness. In other words, the gift of the journalist is, as we have said, to use rich resources artlessly and as belonging all in the day's work. He makes literature then, as it were, without knowing it, the way in which, after all, most real literature is made. We find an apt illustration in the first of Mr. Smalley's chapters on the New England notabilities of half a century ago, his chapter on Daniel Webster. He says:

> When I heard Webster in Faneuil Hall, where he was perhaps at his best and most at home, it seemed to me it mattered little what he said. The authority of the man was what told. Before he had uttered a word he had possession of the minds of the three thousand people who stood—for we were all standing—waiting for the words we knew would be words of wisdom.
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> Twice I have seen a similiar effect by very different artists. Once by Rachel at the Boston Theatre, as Camille in Corneille's Horace, when the mere apparition of that white-robed figure and the first rays from those deep-burning eyes laid a spell on the audience. Not once, but many times, by Aimée Desclée, at the Princess's Theatre in London and at the Gymnase in Paris. Of her I shall have something to say by and by, but I name her now because she had that rarest of gifts, the power of gathering an audience into her two small hands while still, silent and motionless; and thereafter never letting them go. In her it was perhaps a magnetic force of emotion, for she was the greatest of emotional actresses. In Webster it was the domination of an irresistible personality, with an unmatched intellectual supremacy and the prestige of an unequalled career.

Only a born journalist could have written that. We can fancy the plight of the grave historian asked to ponder his impression of Webster in the light of a performance by Rachel, and his humorless assertion that the thing would not be possible. But how simply Mr. Smalley's parallel justifies itself, and how much he gains by this entirely human play of experience and thought about his theme! He has a style wonderfully suited to his treatment of a subject, a style of notable clearness and simplicity. Its success is due in great part to the fact that he always makes sure of his substance, always has something to say, and infallibly knows what to leave out and when to stop. One would surmise that he had been all his life a reader of Sainte-Veuve, whose "Portraits," we may add, his letters often recall. They have much the same kind of vividness that belongs to the work of the great French critic, the kind that is accompanied by tact, measure, a suavity half artistic and half worldly-wise. Indeed, Mr. Smalley may be said to have achieved the prodigiously difficult feat of fusing French delicacy of taste and touch with American vigor and directness.

In the foregoing remarks stress has deliberately been laid upon the way in which Mr. Smalley's work is done, for it is always worth while to dwell upon the virtues of clean, animated and sympathetic English. It is stimulating to come in contact with a writer. But even though these letters have so recently been printed in our own columns as to require no exposition of their contents we may pause for a moment on their purely biographical and historical value. For fifty years and more this sensitive observer has been at close quarters with the great ones of the earth, the statesmen, authors and other leaders of his own country, of England and of Europe. He tells us of their personalities, and, more than that, he tells us something of what they did and a good deal about their ideas. There are anecdotes in the book, there is gossip, but in both cases the souvenirs are those of a man who has cared most, on the whole, for the things of the mind. His portraits are intimate, and have often a sort of homely realism about them, but he takes his sitters on high grounds, painting nearly all of them with close reference to public affairs.

It is interesting to note, by the way, that those affairs are not precisely isolated in an episodical manner. They have been part of one experience, and though Mr. Smalley makes no pretence of binding them together they are enveloped in one atmosphere. The book as a whole, vaguely, perhaps, and yet with a certain quiet force, makes the reader aware of a period. Every personality in it goes somehow "into the picture." Incidentally that picture discloses, as was said at the outset, much relating to the author himself and his long career. In fact, some of the best of his pages are those in which he relates specific experiences of his as a journalist, and especially that revolution in journalism which, as the London correspondent of The Tribune, he accomplished through the transmission of news by cable during the Franco-German war. The joy of battle is felt in this part of the book. British journalism looked a little doubtfully upon "American methods" and could not quite understand what The Tribune was driving at when it printed a dispatch on the battle of Sedan six columns long, with cables costing $1 a word. It did not take long, however, for the policy of this journal to work a momentous change in the reporting of great events, and Mr. Smalley tells the tale with infectious gusto. Here, and indeed throughout his "Memories," he writes with the fire of the true journalist.

THE WOMAN QUESTION

Its Significance to the Welfare of the Race.

WOMAN AND LABOR. By Olive Schreiner. 12mo, pp. 299. The Frederick A. Stokes Company.

This study, it is now sufficiently well known, is a *résumé* of a far larger work on its subject begun by Mrs. Schreiner in her youth, partly finished in the course of many years, but destroyed by fire during the Boer war before its completion. Throughout the book, as written, bears evidence to the scope of the preliminary researches made by its author to equip herself for her task. She never digresses, but furnishes a mass of illustrations from the past of our race and from the organization of the life of animals that adds much to the color and interest of her main argument.

Woman's "parasitism"—a subject much to the fore just now, thanks, no doubt, to this very book—forms the chief subject discussed by Mrs. Schreiner. In its original social significance, that of the idleness of the women of the rich and mighty, imposed upon them by the men as evidence of their own wealth and importance, Mrs. Schreiner attaches but little importance to this parasitism. She even seems to suggest that it may have performed its part in evolution by accelerating the passing of decadent aristocracies for the benefit of newer, more virile and useful ones. It is with the enforced parasitism of modern women, the restriction of their many fields of labor by machinery, by the transferrence of their housewifely tasks to the factory, that she deals. Her point of view here sets her book apart from many others, for it is not the economical side of the problem that appears to her to be of first importance, but the welfare of the race. Woman, she argues, has labored by man's side since the days of the cave dweller. Together they have struggled upward, her share of the giant task being added unto the children she bore in increased brain and brawn, in mind and muscle. Parasitism, she continues, enforced idleness, will rob her of this training by life for the benefit of her offspring. The generations to come will be less capable in proportion to this exclusion from the work of the world.

It is a question of the future of the whole race, intellectually as well as physically, and this woman, the mother, feels, if she cannot always state it in exact terms:

> That the woman's movement of our day has not taken its origin from any mere process of theoretic argument; that it breaks out, now here and now there, in forms divergent and at times superficially, almost irreconcilable; that the majority of those taking part in it are driven into action as the result of the immediate pressure of the conditions of life, and are not always able logically to state the nature of all causes which propel them or to paint clearly all results of their action, so far from removing it from the category of the vast reorganizing movements of humanity, places it in a line with them, showing how vital, spontaneous and wholly organic and unartificial is its nature.

Mrs. Schreiner strikingly illustrates her argument by suggesting that not impossibly it has been the degeneration and parasitism of the female which has set its limitation of the evolution of ants, "creatures, which, having reached a point of mental development in some respects almost as high as that of man, have yet become curiously and immovably arrested."

As for woman's share in the governance of the state, the author holds that her influence there will put an end to war as the means of settling international disputes, not because she has less courage than man, but because she knows the cost of human life to her, whose heroism in creating it Erasmus exalted so high above man's courage in destroying it. In some of her passages Mrs. Schreiner rises to heights of fine eloquence, as where she invokes the free, courageous women of the Teutonic races, immortalized by the Roman historians—the mothers of the women who to-day lead in seeking to continue the work of their men and children among new conditions.

The changing relations between the sexes, the new forms they must take under the new dispensation that is gradually evolving itself, but whose form cannot yet be foreseen, form the subject of the third section of the book, which is profitable reading in its large outlines, even when one cannot agree with her.

DR. JOHNSON'S HOUSE.

To Be Presented to the British Nation as a Memorial.

From The Pall Mall Gazette.

Dr. Johnson's house in Gough-square, Fleet-street, it is reported, has been purchased by Mr. Cecil Harmsworth, and in a short time it will be presented by him to the nation. Even Fleet-street, which is singularly unemotional, may feel a touch of satisfaction in the fact that the house of the "great lexicographer," where he lived for ten years, is not to go the way of his other residences, and fall beneath the hammer of the house breaker. Johnson lived in many places in London, but this "stout, old-fashioned, oak-balustraded house," as Carlyle found it, is perhaps most representative of his character and his work.

It is a solid eighteenth century building, where Johnson labored for the busiest decade of his life. Hither he came a year after he had begun his Dictionary. He had an upper room fitted like a counting house, and here his several copyists wrote out the illustrative passages from the various authorities, which Johnson himself had marked with lead pencil. At times, but not often, he walked in the garden, "a plot of delved ground no longer than a bed quilt."

But the house has other association than that of the Dictionary. Johnson here began both the "Rambler" and the "Idler"; and here he was living when his tragedy of "Irene," now little read, was produced by Garrick. Here also his wife died. In 1755, when Johnson had been in Gough-square seven years, the great Dictionary was published, and the author delivered that smashing blow to the patronage of literature from which it has never recovered.

"Seven years, my lord," he wrote to Chesterfield, his would-be patron, "have now passed since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door. . . . The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labors, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it." When the house becomes national property, those scathing sentences should be inscribed in letters of gold upon its walls.

THE SEAMY SIDE

The Misanthropy of a Rolling Stone.

THE DIARY OF A SOLDIER OF FORTUNE. By Stanley Portall Hyatt. Illustrated. 8vo, pp. vii, 359. The John Lane Company.

Mr. Hyatt left England at the age of seventeen, and returned home "only twenty-eight in point of years, but middle-aged in reality, penniless, disappointed, weary, a broken man, to begin life anew if I could. And that my Good Comrade has made possible." Thus ends this chronicle of eleven years' wanderings that carried its author clear around the world, almost entirely in tropical latitudes. He was an electrical engineer and sheep station hand in Australia, a "nigger driver," hunter, trader, transport rider, labor agent and cold storage engineer in British South Africa, and a rubber concessionaire in the adjoining Portuguese colony, a lecturer in Durban, Mauritius, British India and the Philippines, a newspaper correspondent and American soldier there, and a tramp—the latter in the United States, one assumes, for his record ends with his Philippine adventures.

The book is excellent reading, as varied in interest and color as one would expect from such a career, to whose many trades Mr. Hyatt has since then added that of authorship, two novels having already preceded this book of his. One of them deals with the last days of the old South Africa, before the coming of the railroad, the other with the discomfort of an adventurer returned to the smugness of civilization.

Civilization has become unpalatable to this rover, if, indeed, he did not already dislike it when he bade it farewell, a mere boy. What he saw of it on his travels was not the best of it, of course, on its rude frontier, where the worst of men is as likely to come out as their best. He was in Rhodesia in the earliest days of the Chartered Company; in fact, the bulk of his book is devoted to his South African adventures, Australia being dismissed with a scant chapter, and the Philippines with five at the end, out of a total of thirty-two. In Rhodes's country he learned to hate the British Africanders, to tolerate the Boers, but with many reservations, and to despise the offspring of British and Boer marriages, still more the horde of foreigners, from Germans to Greeks, that followed in the wake of the Anglo-Saxon advance, battening on its labor. Of his own countrymen he speaks with no less unrestraint, giving the English in Rhodesia credit, however, for the lack of a characteristic that he found dominating them again in India—snobbery. In fact, he is so sharply critical throughout of his fellow humans that one cannot help wishing for a pen sketch of him by one or more of those who came in contact with him, as they saw him in their turn. The African natives fare far better at his hands, at least their chiefs and his Basuto transport driver. Of his opinion of the Americans in the Philippines more later on.

Mr. Hyatt gives vivid pictures of the squalor, discouragement, hatred and uncharitableness, trickery and dishonesty of the early days of the Rhodesian adventure. He was already at that time volunteer correspondent of a London financial paper, in whose columns, he informs us, he told unpalatable truths that did not suit the stock exchange side of the undertaking. It is an unpleasant picture, but, as already indicated, it is possible that allowance must be made for the personal equation. The best passages are those dealing with Mr. Hyatt's subsequent free life as transport rider, in the open, among the natives. He tells of sport as well as of work and trading, describes the jungle of Portuguese East Africa with a vivid touch, and, incidentally, narrates how near his brother—the loved brother who went with him through all these later adventures only to die in England—came to being poisoned at a native kraal. The other great affection of these lonely days Mr. Hyatt sums up in the following typical passage:

> I have come across but few men who had the loyalty and the courage and the patience of those treck bullocks of mine. I would sooner find them in Walhalla than I would meet ninety-nine out of a hundred of the white men with whom I have had to do. They never went back on me. Biffel would come and shove his great head under my arm when I called. To the crowd he might be a savage black bull of abnormal size; to me he was a faithful friend. . . . And then men treat Kaffirs and bullocks as mere beasts, which merely proves what I learned before I had reached twenty-one, that the majority of men consists of shortsighted fools. . . . If you want faithful service, unselfish love, unflinching courage, look for it in a dog, a Basuto, or a treck bullock, anywhere but in a white man on whom the curse of the South African tradition has fallen.

The two brothers left South Africa penniless, and made their way eastward around the world by all kinds of devices commanded by their continued lack of funds. Mr. Hyatt's views of humanity are reflected most strongly perhaps in the tale he tells of his Philippine experiences. He divides the Americans there into Southerners and Yankees, awarding all the virtues to the former, all the crimes to the others. He praises the military establishment, and condemns the civil administration, seriously claiming that a plot was set on foot to have him put out of the way by the natives. The book is a realistic revelation of the seamy side of vagabondage, and of the deplorable effect it may have in shaping the view of life and men of the immature. It is curiously interesting reading.

HOLBEIN'S ORGAN SHUTTERS.

From The Athenæum.

Holbein's organ shutters, painted for the Cathedral at Basle, but removed thence in 1785, have, after some vicissitudes, found a permanent home in the Basle Museum. On the initiative of Dr. Ganz they have been carefully restored. Holbein's sketch for these panels is also preserved at Basle, in the Kunstsammlung.

FICTION

A Batch of New Novels for the Spring.

HATRED IN THE HOUSE.

THE VALLEY CAPTIVES. By R. Macaulay. 12mo, pp. 335. Henry Holt & Co.

The valley is in Wales; the home of slackness and hatred might have the green shutters through which, some years ago, we peeked out the dark side of the idyllic kailyard, but, unfortunately, the human nature it shelters is not of merely local significance. This new author has talent, there can be no doubt of that, and a pen already admirably trained for its work; still, in the end one doubts whether the easy adjective "powerful" applies to this bitterly unpleasant chronicle. The announcement on the slip cover of the book invites comparison with the greatest of surviving British novelists. The invitation overlooks the consideration that even in his grimmest and most discouraging mood Thomas Hardy does not lack humor, though it be but the humor of a despairing Weltanschauung. Mr. Macaulay handles his leading characters with assured consistency. Not an incongruous touch, not a false line, can be found in these five portraits, of a father who follows the line of least resistance in his philosophy of life as in his conduct of it; of his son, a born artist, but condemned to agriculture because that is less bother; of his daughter, silent, determined; and of their stepmother's two children, who cow the boy and tyrannize over the girl until hatred broods in the house and smoulders toward an outbreak.

Gray is the atmosphere of this Welsh valley—unrelieved, depressing gray. It spreads from the protagonists to the minor characters with hardly a ray of weakest, watery sunshine; it envelops all these Welsh men and women in the valley beyond the reach of the modern world. The author has no doubt as much warrant for his view of Welsh life and character as had the author of "The Green Shutters" for his revelation of the Scots. It all depends upon the point of view. Others have already told us of the sunny side of Wales.

LOVE IN OLD VIRGINIA.

THE COLONEL'S STORY. By Mrs. Roger A. Pryor. 12mo, pp. 387. The Macmillan Company.

Mrs. Pryor has told a winning tale of the Old South—the hospitable, sentimental Old South, full of manifestations of virtues and courtesies which are now, perhaps, esteemed too old-fashioned for consideration in a world of haste and business. The Colonel, the punctilious, generous and tender-hearted Southerner of sixty years ago, is a charming character, and is charmingly portrayed in a method which is itself old-fashioned. The patriarchal Virginia household, in which everybody, including the cook and the gardener, is lovable and high-minded, is thrown into agreeable relief by the incursion of the villain from the North; he brings an element without which the picture might seem almost too honeyed. The book will have many pleased readers, especially in the South, and it will, no doubt, be useful in the future to the student of social history. Its author was a part of that Southern life and it is glorified for her in regretful memory. It is well that there should be thus preserved the pleasant aspects of conditions which can never return in this country—which can never be seen again, indeed, in any part of the civilized world.

A DESERT DRAMA.

THE GOLDEN SILENCE. By C. N. and A. M. Williamson. Illustrated. 12mo, pp. 325. Doubleday, Page & Co.

A motor car plays a brief part in this story of the North African desert; otherwise the book is not at all what these authors have accustomed us to expect from their pens. Here are no merry journeyings in the ever fascinating "machine"; danger and suspense quiver in these pages, and the ruthless passion of a man of the East for a girl of the West—a passion which grows to desperation in the "golden silence" of the desert. Most of the action passes there, and it turns upon the almost successful attempt of the Arab officer to marry, willy-nilly, the beautiful American heroine, a dancer from Indiana. He practically kidnaps her, and she is rescued only after an exciting fight in a ruined desert fortress. Much of the desert atmosphere of mystery and arid beauty has been cleverly conveyed into the story, and its thrills are sufficiently realistic. It is not a novel of character, but one of incident, and its puppets move rapidly, plausibly and entertainingly.

A DANCING HEROINE.

FENELLA. By H. L. Stuart. 12mo, pp. 400. Doubleday, Page & Co.

A tale of many emotional adventures set in a plot of even more happenings in the outer world, which is chiefly that of London, in its social, financial, theatrical and Grub Street aspects. The plot reaches to the offspring of an aristocratic mesalliance for its heroine, who becomes a dancer; across the ocean to Connecticut for its hero, whom it brings to England via the Légion Etrangère. From America comes also the other woman, whose clever books have made for her a place in London. The road of true love never yet ran less smoothly, nor was the road of the rolling stone turned littérateur ever harder than in this tale. One doubts a little, in the end, if the other woman would not have been the wiser choice for the man, had fate not interfered, but the happy ending that is reached instead will suit the romantically inclined far better. The story is told by an onlooker, one of the proverbial kind that sees most of the game. It is good reading, wherefore it is well that there is a great deal of it.

THE FIRST BORN.

THE VERY LITTLE PERSON. By Mary Heaton Vorse. Illustrations by Rose O'Neill. 16mo, pp. 164. The Houghton Mifflin Company.

Every American father will recognize something of himself in this book, and so will every American mother and grandmother, not to mention many American nurses. And Americans who are not fathers or mothers or grandmothers will recognize those among their friends and acquaintances that are, and they all together will recognize the baby, which is a typical American baby, because the whole family existence is made to centre in it and turn around it from the moment of its birth. We are the nation of baby worshippers *par excellence*, even though, or perhaps because, we are as yet fond and indulgent rather than wise and wisely trained parents. There is this particular "very little person's" method of getting its own way, for instance. Mrs. Vorse does not lack the saving sense of humor. There is a twinkle in her eye as she holds up the mirror to American parental and American infantile human nature.

MODERNISM.

THE PRIEST. A Tale of Modernism in New England. By the author of "Letters to His Holiness Pope Pius X." 12mo, pp. 269. Boston: Sherman, French & Co.

To follow in the footsteps of Antonio Fogazzaro is a natural ambition, but, whereas the Italian novelist was a master of his craft, the present author is a mere beginner, whose first attempt at fiction with a purpose shows, moreover, no marked aptitude for this form of controversial literature. The book is, if anything, far too smoothly planned. There is no conflict of wills, of the traditional and the scientific authority. The surrender is sudden, both in theology and in an ultimate ending that, one would think, is not wisely chosen, because it goes so unnecessarily far and introduces an entirely irrelevant, if very human, motive. The author's choice of a New England factory town for the sake of vivid contrasts is well seen, but he has failed to make the best use of the opportunity thus created. The story is told from the outside.

WHOLESALE MURDER.

THE MAN WITH THE BLACK CORD. By Augusta Groner. Translated by Grace Isabel Colbron. 12mo, pp. 287. Duffield & Co.

With an abundant home supply of detective fiction, it would appear a work of supererogation to add to its steady flow by translation from foreign tongues. Augusta Groner has, however, a pretty talent of her own in the construction of mysterious plots. The Austrian setting of her stories, moreover, of which this is the second to be rendered into English, adds to the interest of a narrative that begins with the inexplicable disappearance from a securely locked room of a man of substance, an occurrence to which circumstances give the appearance of a cleverly planned assassination and disposal of the body of the victim. There are clews, of course, and more clews, and the necessary detective to follow them one by one. Under the Austrian law an amateur poking his nose into police affairs would quickly be told to mind his own business; therefore the unraveller of this complicated case is a professional who has turned private detective for greater glory and profit. There are those to whom all detective stories look very much alike. For them tales like this one are not written. But amateurs will find it to their liking.

WOMAN'S SHARE.

THE HEART OF THE BUSH. A Love Story of To-day. By Edith Searle Grossman. Colored frontispiece. 12mo, pp. 334. The John Lane Company.

This story of life on a New Zealand sheep range is of genuine interest on account of its understanding picture of the hardship of a woman educated in England who weds a rude frontiersman. She loves him and admires his pioneer strength, his mastery of his environment, but yet, for all his adoration, there lies between them the chasm of manners and social usages, of cultured existence and its amenities, its incessant little acts of sophisticated chivalry. She is his woman, in the primitive sense of the word, to whom he comes, for instance, in all good faith, fresh from killing sheep, with their blood still upon his clothes. The business of earning a livelihood, of striving onward materially, is the first preoccupation of his life. After the manner of his kind, he takes her for granted. The author provides a happy ending, even as she prefaces an idyllic honeymoon with a rude, awkward, masterful wooing, clumsy, self-assertive, yet timid, but the significance of the story lies in her discerning picture of differences between which an average can only be struck by many surrenders on the woman's part.

ONCE MORE.

QUICKSANDS. By Fannie Heaslip Lea. Illustrations by Clinton Balmer. 12mo, pp. 331. The Sturgis & Walton Company.

The uncertainty of conjugal love is apparently the subject nearest to hand for the novelist, because there are so many examples of it in current fiction. This probing of the emotions is becoming somewhat monotonous; it is high time for some benefactor to inaugurate a new genre for the relief of readers. The triangle of this latest addition to the mass is innocent enough so far as it goes, and it is broken at what is known in the jargon of the hour as the "psychological moment" by the change of heart of the lady implicated. She had fallen out of love with her husband; she falls in love again with him when she discovers that he is in danger of becoming the next victim of a first class family feud. From this the reader will know that it all happened in the South. The novelist and music critic from New York who was the cause of the incipient trouble atoned nobly. This is one of many reasons why the reviewer respects the pseudonyme under which the author hides his identity. The book is rather well written. The author should try her hand at less hackneyed material.

METEMPSYCHOSIS.

THE RETURN. By Walter De La Mare. 12mo, pp. 254. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Was it metempsychosis? The author is so vague on the subject of his own book that in the end he misses his point, if he has one in view, that is, and wearies the reader. The case is this: A convalescent escapes from his sickroom and wanders into a graveyard, which is not exactly the most cheerful place to select for a first outing. Here he discovers the gravestone of a Huguenot, who, according to the epitaph, had committed suicide a century ago. On his return home he discovers, on looking in his mirror, that he has changed beyond recognition. He looks foreign, dark. Even the color of his hair is changed. His wife does not recognize him—her case, by the way, is rather more interesting than the husband's, who discovers shortly afterward an old French book containing the suicide's engraved portrait. The dead man's face has become his own. So far so good; but beyond this the author chooses such indecisive, shadowy grays, he confuses the case so obscurely, that the interest is lost. The book is neither interesting metapsychics nor sound fiction.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Current Talk of Things Present and to Come.

Mr. Kipling's short history of England for "the young of all ages" will be published here in October next. Twenty poems will be set within its prose, and it will have divers illustrations. The work is mentioned as striking and unusual.

Antidote for Socialism.

Mr. G. W. Perkins's articles on "Profit Sharing as an Antidote for Socialism" will appear during the summer in "The World's Work." The first of them will be published in the June number.

The Duke's Test.

In the first published reminiscences of Queen Elizabeth of Rumania is an odd story of her grandfather, the Duke of Nassau—a prince in whom was firmly established the mediæval German theories respecting women. He had just married his second wife, and, says the Queen, "that there might be no mistake at all as to the position he intended to assume, the wedding ceremony was no sooner over and the newly married couple alone in their travelling carriage than he proceeded to light his pipe, and, closing the windows, smoked hard in her face for a few hours, just to see if she would venture to remonstrate or complain!"

"The Celestial Omnibus."

Under this curious title has just been published in London a volume of fantasies by Mr. E. M. Forster, author of the novel, "Howard's End." Mr. Roger Fry has made the decorations for this volume.

Eugene Field in England.

The complete edition of Eugene Field's poems is coming out in England. This is the edition of the Chicago writer's work which has been issued in this country by the Scribners.

First Aid to the Poet.

The "Dictionnaire des Rimes," with which François Coppée worked, has been placed as an interesting relic in the Carnavalet Museum. There are romantic persons who will be surprised at this proof that a man of genius required such aid. It is said that a journalistic friend calling upon Coppée one day found this worn volume on the poet's writing table, and exclaimed in astonishment: "Do you use a 'Dictionnaire des Rimes'?" Coppée smiled. "I am sometimes a poor hand at short lines," he said. "Then when I come across a 'rebel' which defies my imagination I turn to my dictionary. Now you have the secret. You need not tell your readers of my method, or they will think it is only necessary to possess themselves of a dictionary to become poets."

"Queed."

This is the rather odd title of a novel by Mr. Henry Sydnor Harrison which the Houghton Mifflin Company will publish next week. It is also the name of the leading character in the story, which is said to be one of "wise and humorous optimism." The publishers have had the whimsical idea of getting a number of professors of English classes in various colleges to carry on among their pupils a prize contest over the idea of the kind of man suggested by the name Queed. Some of the opinions submitted are amusing in themselves, and taken together they show the amazing range which speculation may take in a matter of the sort.

Queed is conceived as a famous detective and as a kleptomaniac, as "a tall, spare, generous, kind-hearted photographer," and as "a man of great poetical influence, who died and was buried at Portugal, Spain." One contestant imagines him as the keeper of a college inn, living in Lucerne, and another describes him thus: "So this was Queed, the man who, by his diabolical ingenuity in the use of poisons, has terrorized the world." Some of the descriptions were submitted in verse. "The whole competition smacks of innocent and delightful drollery. "Queed," of course, will be awaited with lively curiosity.

A Politician and Novels.

The lately published biography of Viscount Goschen shows that, like many other men of large public affairs, he was a devoted reader of novels. It is said that "on one of his long Continental journeys, he being then an elderly man, a bedroom had been secured for him at Cologne that he might enjoy a night's rest on the way. He had, however, taken up at starting one of Gaboriau's novels to read in the train, and was only half way through it when he arrived at Cologne. There, as had been arranged, he betook himself to the bespoken room at the hotel, where he spent the whole night, not in the contemplated repose, but in finishing his novel, continuing the journey next day without ever having been to bed."

Legros as a Sportsman.

There is an amusing description of the sporting experiences of the French artist Legros in the just published reminiscences of Mr. A. G. C. Liddell. While staying in Scotland Legros expressed a wish to be initiated into the mysteries of British field sports:

> Accordingly, one morning he descended the stairs in his usual black clothes and wideawake, finished off by a pair of his host's gaiters, snapping his fingers and shouting, "Tous les petits oiseaux euront peur de moi!" When we took the field he began by carrying his gun muzzle downward, as if it were a walking stick. Mr. Graham explained to him how the weapon was to be used and carried, and he took his station in the line next to his preceptor. There was not much competition for the place on the other side of the enterprising novice, but my curiosity led me to occupy it. And it turned out to be perfectly safe, as he carried his gun at half-cock and held it in front of him, the muzzle at an angle of 45 degrees from the ground. After a time a capercailzie was seen, and our host led the would-be sportsman toward him. The bird seemed quite to understand the situation, as he allowed us to get within fifty yards of him, when Mr. Graham directed Legros to fire. The artist cocked his gun and, presenting arms, discharged it with great care at the same angle at which he had been carrying it, and, needless to say, produced no effect on the capercailzie. Afterward until lunch, when he left us, he was too cautious to open fire again.
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> Not content with his gunning experience, Legros insisted the next day on being taken out fishing. He was accordingly set down in the stern of one of the harling boats opposite to a rod. After a time a fish took his fly. Remembering the instructions of yesterday, he jumped up, and pressing the butt of the rod to his shoulder held it in the position of a gun. The boatmen were paralyzed with astonishment, but on recovering themselves exhorted him with shouts of "Row, mon!" "Row!" "Gie him the butt!" hastily translated for the sportsman's benefit by Miss Graham—"Roulez, monsieur!" "Roulez!" "Il faut toujours presenter le bout de la machine au poisson!" I need hardly say that after a few moments of the wildest confusion the fly came back.

Delinquent Librarians.

It is reported that disagreeable discoveries have been made by the commissioners appointed by the Italian government to examine the various national libraries with a view to gathering exhibits for the approaching exposition at Turin. Valuable and beautiful books have been found soiled or mutilated—sometimes treasures of this kind are missing altogether. Sets of volumes are dispersed and lost; there have been unpardonable losses even in the Vittorio Emannuele library at Rome. Similar complaints, by the way, are heard in Spain. We are told that the care of English libraries is excellent, but this was not invariably the case fifty years ago in cathedral and collegiate libraries. "The Manchester Guardian" quotes two of the instances given by Mr. Blades: "In one case a broken pane had been so long left unrepaired that a tendril of ivy had crept in along the top of a row of books. It served admirably as a duct during rainfalls, with the result that a row of books the least valuable of which would have been cheap at £100 was badly damaged. In the second case it was a broken skylight which did the mischief. There was a bookcase below it, and the value of its contents—chiefly Caxtons and specimens of early English printing—was such that one of the volumes, though saturated and stained and rotten, was sold for £200."

Barred Books.

An attempt to induce the Manchester (England) City Council to rescind its action barring Mr. H. G. Wells's book, "The New Machiavelli," from the free libraries has failed. Complaint was made that the Council was being held up to ridicule on account of its "Puritanism" in refusing to buy the book; but this complaint had no effect upon the worshipful members. One of Mr. Wells's previous books was stoutly denounced as "poisonous," and it was asserted that if that one was poisonous the new book was still more so.

For the Browning Fanatic.

Mr. Eden Phillpotts has been delivering his mind on the subject of Robert